

Job Aid

Models for Promoting Culturally Competent Patient-Provider Communication

BATHE Model

The BATHE Model is a useful memory aid for bringing out the patient's psychological and social context by asking simple questions about background, affect (feeling state), trouble, handling, and empathy. BATHE stands for:

B—Background: The simple question “What is going on in your life?” brings out the context of the patient’s visit.

A—Affect: Asking “How do you feel about what is going on?” or “What is your mood?” allows the patient to report and label the current feeling state.

T—Trouble: “What about the situation troubles you the most?” helps the provider and patient focus, and may bring out the symbolic significance of the illness or event.

H—Handling: “How are you handling that?” gives an assessment of functioning and provides direction for an intervention.

E—Empathy: “That must be very difficult for you” legitimizes the patient’s feelings and provides psychological support.



The content for this material was excerpted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health— *A Physician’s Practical Guide to Culturally Competent Care*. Available at:
<https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.org/default.asp>